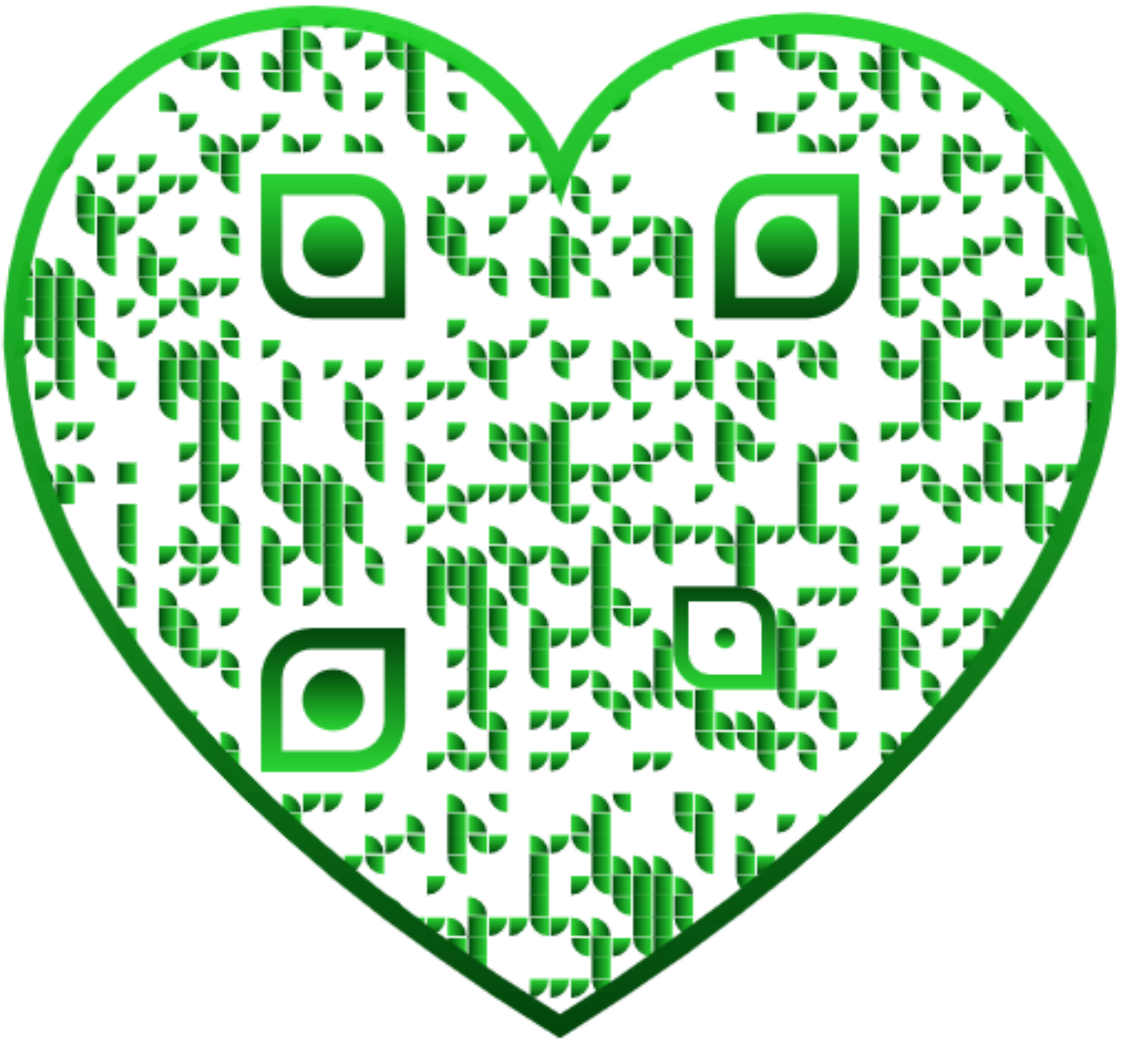
FALLEN ANGEL

UFO Crash Near Laredo, Texas

By Noe Torres



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DEDICATION

To the citizens of Laredo, Texas – one of the nation's oldest, proudest, and most unique communities – and to the wonderful folks at the Webb County Heritage Foundation, most especially Margarita Araiza and Christina Saucedo.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

The term "fallen angel" is used by the U.S. military to signify a crashed aircraft. In UFO lore, the term reportedly also refers to a downed extraterrestrial craft and is used when dispatching a military UFO retrieval team to the crash site.

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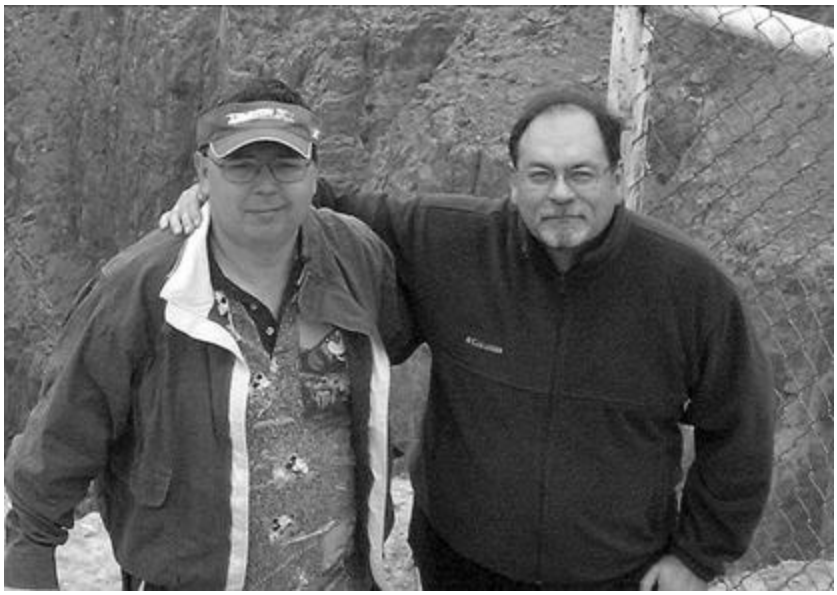
INTRODUCTION

Early in 2005, the History Channel contacted my friend and fellow UFO researcher, Ruben J. Uriarte of Union City, California, about a reported mid-air collision between a small plane and a UFO along the Texas-Mexico border in 1974. Ruben, who at the time was director of the Mutual UFO Network (MUFON) for Northern California, was interviewed extensively about the case. The result was a television documentary called "Mexico's Roswell," which first aired on the History Channel's UFO Files series late in 2005.

The show generated a great deal of interest worldwide in UFO cases occurring along the border between Texas and Mexico. Shortly after Ruben completed work on the History Channel project, he and I began working on a book about the 1974 "Mexico's Roswell" case, which also included a section about an alleged, earlier UFO crash near Laredo, Texas, in 1948.

Ruben and I were both fascinated by the Laredo case, and we spent quite a lot of time gathering information about it. Ruben remembered reading a detailed account of the case in the exhaustive book UFO Crash at Aztec: A Well Kept Secret by William Steinman and Wendelle Stevens, and that book became

our starting point. We were very fortunate to interview Wendelle Stevens by phone a couple of times before he passed away in 2010 at the age of 87.



Noe Torres (left) and Ruben Uriarte (right) during 2006 UFO investigation in Mexico

We were also very lucky to strike up a correspondence by e-mail with another key early Laredo crash researcher, the late W. Todd Zechel, who passed away in November 2006, just a few months after talking to us.

Also in 2006, an influential Texas-based magazine, Texas Monthly, published an online story called "Close Encounters of the Lone Star Kind," written by Pamela Coloff, which listed the 1948 UFO crash near Laredo as one of the top ten UFO cases ever reported in the state. The article caused Ruben Uriarte and me to become even more intrigued by the case.

By the time our book, Mexico's Roswell: The Chihuahua UFO Crash, was published in mid-year 2006, we had amassed so much data about the "Mexico's Roswell" case from 1974 that we, unfortunately, had to drop our plans to include a section about the

Laredo UFO crash of 1948.

I used the material we had gathered on the Laredo case to write an article for Wikipedia, the online encyclopedia. I was surprised that Wikipedia, whose editors are generally not kind to stories with a paranormal or "otherworldly" slant, have left my original article on the Laredo UFO crash pretty much untouched over the years. A similar article I wrote about a 1955 incident involving an Air Force F-86 fighter jet pilot who encountered a UFO and watched it crash near Del Rio, Texas, was completely excised from Wikipedia shortly after I contributed it. Because Ruben Uriarte and I had written a book about the Del Rio case, the Wikipedia editors felt we had a "conflict of interest" and were thus unqualified to write an article about it. Never mind that Ruben and I are avowed experts on the case based on our years of gathering data and eyewitness testimony. That apparently does not matter to Wikipedia.

After writing the Wikipedia article about the Laredo UFO crash, I thought about the possibility of turning my notes and research materials about the case into a book. By way of exploring that possibility, I sent a copy of the Wikipedia article to my fellow author and UFO researcher Kevin J. Randle, who co-authored the landmark 1991 book The Truth About the UFO Crash at Roswell. I was hoping that I might draw from Kevin some encouragement for writing a book about it and possibly also some additional information about the case.

Unfortunately, it quickly became clear that Kevin is not a fan of the Laredo UFO case, and he considers it to be an event of no particular significance. He does not believe it was a UFO incident at all and thinks that the photos of the dead pilot that have been circulated on the Internet actually show an unidentified human pilot that has been horribly burned beyond recognition.

Ruben Uriarte and I decided that our second collaboration should be a book about the reported crash of a UFO near Del Rio,

Texas, in 1955. Our book, The Other Roswell: UFO Crash on the Texas-Mexico Border, published in 2007, revealed the fascinating eyewitness account of Colonel Robert Burton Willingham. The former Air Force Reserve pilot claims that, in 1955, he chased an intensely bright, orb-shaped UFO in his F-86 fighter jet across the skies of Southwest Texas. Willingham says he saw the object crash near Del Rio, Texas, and several hours later, he visited the crash site and saw the wreckage of a metallic-silver flying disc and even picked up some of the debris.

Ruben and I had now produced books from two of the three original Texas "UFO crash" stories about which I had originally gathered data back in 2006. The only story that had not yet yielded a book was the Laredo UFO crash of 1948, which in some ways was the most puzzling of the three.

Noe Torres Speaking at 2011 Laredo UFO Conference

In 2011, I heard that the Webb County Heritage Foundation of Laredo, inspired by the story of the 1948 crash, was planning the city's first-ever UFO conference. I was thrilled to hear that this

fascinating story would finally come more fully to light. I immediately began gathering my notes together on the case in preparation for the publication of this book that you now hold in your hands.

Did an unknown object really crash near Laredo in 1948? If so, was it something unexplained, or was it simply an experimental missile or aircraft? What about reports that one or more "alien" bodies were recovered from the wreckage? We may never have a definitive answer to these intriguing questions, but we do know this – the story of a UFO crash near Laredo, Texas, in 1948, whether real or not, remains an incredibly exciting unsolved mystery.

Noe Torres, November 2011

ONE: UFO CRASH

Reports have persisted over the years that an unidentified flying disc crashed in northeastern Mexico, some thirty to forty miles south-southwest of Laredo, Texas, in the summer of 1948. Although the details of this crash are elusive, they are nonetheless quite intriguing.

In a story that first surfaced in 1978, a former military photographer claimed that the UFO was first picked up by radar in Washington State on July 7 at 1:22 p.m. The strange object later moved over Albuquerque, New Mexico, executed a sharp turn to the south, and eventually flew into Texas. Along its route, at least two military aircraft pursued the fast-moving object, which they reportedly described only as a "metallic streak." One witness stated that the military airwaves were filled with chatter about the incredibly fast-moving airship.

The fighter jets continued their pursuit of the object from the skies over Albuquerque all the way into Texas. Some accounts claim that the jets fired on the object and may have been responsible for downing it.

Similar UFO Shape from 1988 Sighting

In her article "Close Encounters of the Lone Star Kind," Pamela Coloff of Texas Monthly magazine reported, "Rumored to be a large disc, it had supposedly flown over Albuquerque at around 2,000 miles per hour before crashing…."

At approximately 2:29 p.m., the flying disc slowed from an estimated 2,000 miles per hour down to about 90 miles per hour, and it began a wobbly, erratic descent, finally dropping out of radar range somewhere in the vicinity of Laredo, Texas. Radio triangulation established that the object had crashed thirty to forty miles south of Laredo, near the Rio Grande River, but on the Mexican side of the international boundary.

In UFO Crash at Aztec: A Well Kept Secret, authors William S. Steinman and Wendelle C. Stevens reported that the crash occurred at "a point near the Sabinas River and about 30 miles southwest of Laredo, Texas, but across the border in the Mexican State of Nuevo Leon, on 7 July 1948. This site … was not far from the highway to Mexico City, and near where the Rio Sabinas joins the Rio Salado before they empty into the Rio Grande." This is in the general area of the Sierra Madre Oriental. The reported crash site was somewhere west-northwest of the small town of Zapata, Texas.

Circle Shows Approximate Crash Site (Map Courtesy of U.T. Austin Libraries)

In the summer of 1948, this area of northeastern Mexico was extremely remote and very sparsely populated. It was into this rugged and remote corner of our planet that a fireball fell one July afternoon, carrying what some people say was an occupant from beyond the earth. At least one report states that the UFO crashed "possibly due to interception by American military aircraft."

The USAF's Lockheed F-80A Jet Fighter, circa 1948
(USAF Museum)

The jet fighter planes that pursued the UFO and possibly shot at it were most likely dispatched from San Antonio, 150 miles away, or San Angelo, 400 miles away. A jet fighter out of San Antonio, traveling at 500 miles per hour, would have arrived in the area in about fifteen minutes. Meanwhile, from Goodfellow Air Force Base in San Angelo, a jet could make the 400-mile flight in less than an hour.

Assuming that the Air Force scrambled one or more F-80a jet fighters out of one of its Texas bases, each plane was equipped with six 50-caliber machine guns and eight 5-inch rockets. They could have inflicted the damage that brought the UFO down near the Rio Grande River. Although the original source states that F-94 jets were used, the F-94s did not enter the military arsenal until 1949. Their immediate predecessor, however, was the F-80a.

TWO: U.S. INVOLVEMENT

Because the unidentified airship was first spotted over U.S. airspace, the American military apparently decided that the object belonged to them. The problem was that the UFO had clearly gone down on Mexican soil, more than twenty miles from the Rio Grande River, which forms the international boundary. Behind the scenes at the highest levels of the U.S. military, a well-rehearsed playbook was put into use. Military officials contacted the Mexican government with the story that the U.S. had lost an "experimental aircraft," which had spun out of control and crashed just over the Rio Grande, south of Laredo. The Americans assertively informed the Mexicans that U.S troops were deploying rapidly to the area in order to recover the highly classified and possibly dangerous experiment that had crashed near Zapata County.

To the Mexicans, the story must certainly have seemed plausible, as they were aware that the U.S. had been testing rocket technology in the Southwest and that some of those rockets often went astray, including one that crashed just south of Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua, Mexico on May 29, 1947.

1950 V-2 Rocket Launch (NASA Photo)

Steinman and Stevens, in UFO Crash at Aztec, put forth the theory that the point man for the U.S. intervention to recover the 1948 Laredo UFO was no less than Secretary of State George C. Marshall. Acting on behalf of President Harry S. Truman, Marshall "reportedly intervened directly with the Mexican government and obtained permission for U.S. Army personnel to recover the remains of a U.S. 'Special Test Vehicle' that had gone out of control and crashed in Mexico.

According to a February 12, 2006 article in the Pittsburgh Tribune-Review, many UFO researchers often mention Marshall as having played a key role in the U.S. government's efforts to keep a lid on several major UFO incidents. The article quotes a staff member of the George C. Marshall Foundation Library in Lexington, Virginia, as saying that he had noticed "a stream of UFOlogists visiting the library to authenticate Marshall's signature on various documents." As it turns out, a number of the aforementioned "Majestic 12" papers make reference to Marshall. These documents, some of dubious origin, are purported to be top-

secret U.S. government letters and memos confirming a conspiracy to keep hidden the existence of UFOs.

George C. Marshall (U.S. Military Archives)

According to Steinman and Stevens, Marshall was calling the shots on July 7, 1948, as the U.S. Army quickly put "boots on the ground" in Nuevo Leon, Mexico, near the Rio Sabinas, west of Zapata, Texas. In his role as secretary of state in the Truman administration, Marshall "intervened directly" with the Mexican government to ensure that the recovery taskforce would not be interfered with as it raced to the scene of the UFO crash.

The book UFO Crash at Aztec also names another key player in the rush to secure the crash site and recover the debris: John W. Bowen, provost marshal at Carswell Air Force Base in Fort Worth, Texas. As provost marshal, Bowen was the head of Carswell's military police. A seasoned military security officer himself, Bowen was given the critical task of taking full control of the Nuevo Leon crash site. He was charged with cordoning off and controlling the area of the crash. Without doubt, he was given full authority to use deadly force to keep unauthorized personnel away

from the site of the crash. As Bowen arrived at the unearthly scene, he joined a larger force consisting of personnel from other military bases who had arrived to secure the area.

Pamela Coloff's article in Texas Monthly said, "Gossip circulated throughout the '50s that several officers from an air force base near Laredo were instructed on July 7, 1948 to cordon off a remote strip of land where an extraterrestrial aircraft had crashed."

The additional officers and other personnel could have come from one of several bases located in San Antonio, 150 miles away. Although Laredo Army Air Field had been deactivated in 1945, San Antonio was the Air Force capital of the Southwest with four major bases: Lackland Air Force Base, Randolph Air Force Base, Kelly Air Base, and Brooks Air Force Base. All four bases were active in 1948 and could have easily supplied the "muscle" needed to take full control of the Nuevo Leon crash site and facilitate the recovery of a crashed alien spacecraft. This scenario seems likely in view of reports that a convoy of huge Army trucks transported the UFO remains to San Antonio Air Depot at Kelly Air Force Base for study.

Map Showing Laredo and Cities with Nearest Air Force Bases, San Antonio and San Angelo

Coincidentally, Colonel Nathan F. Twining served as the Air Corps Technical Supervisor at San Antonio Air Depot in the late 1930s, before a meteoric rise that landed him in the office of Air Force Chief of Staff under President Dwight D. Eisenhower by 1950. Twining's name appears frequently in documents suggesting that he might have been part of a government conspiracy to cover up the existence of UFOs. Most notable to UFO researchers is a memo to Twining from Eisenhower's special assistant, Robert Cutler. In the memo, Cutler makes reference to a National Security Council (NSC) Special Studies Project (SSP) called "MJ-12." To many in the UFO community, this document is the "smoking gun" that proves the U.S. government had a top-secret organization called Majestic 12 whose role was to keep UFOs hidden from the American public. The full text of the Cutler-Twining Memo can be found in Appendix C of this book.

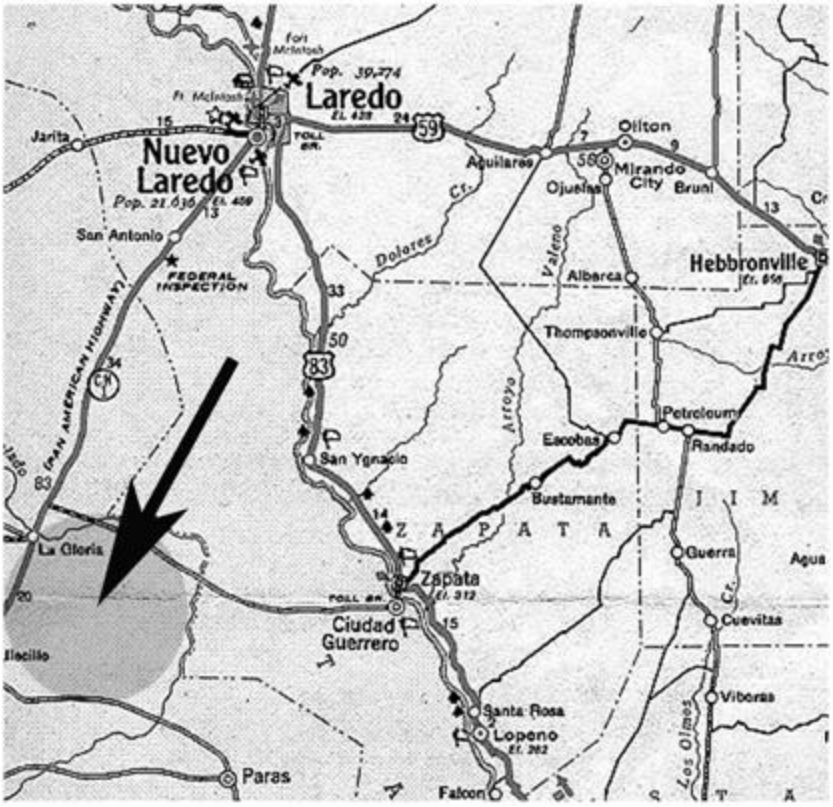
Nathan F. Twining (U.S. Military Archives)

It is extremely interesting, though perhaps merely anecdotally so, that the names of George C. Marshall and Nathan F. Twining surface in an investigation regarding the crash and recovery of a possible alien extraterrestrial spacecraft in Southwest Texas in 1948. In this respect, the Laredo area crash contains much of the same cloak-and-dagger intrigue as the Roswell incident in 1947.

THREE: THE CRASH SITE

The Laredo-area crash was said to have occurred shortly after 2:29 p.m. One report places U.S. troops at the crash site four hours after radar indicated that the UFO had gone down between thirty and forty miles south of Laredo. The account states that both Army and Air Force personnel arrived in the area at approximately 6:30 p.m. The incursion into Mexico was undertaken after U.S. Secretary of State George C. Marshall contacted Mexican government officials to inform them that the U.S. would be engaged in recovering an "experimental aircraft" that had crashed just over the Rio Grande River.

After John W. Bowen, provost marshal of Carswell Air Force Base, arrived at the crash site and took control of security matters, the stage was set for retrieval of the UFO debris. However, before the artifacts were removed, the U.S. Army called in a military photographer with a very high security clearance to capture still pictures of this amazing scene.



Crash Site Shown On Circa 1948 Texas Road Map

At 8:50 p.m., a photographer assigned to the White Sands Missile Test Center in New Mexico was alerted that he would be immediately airlifted to the site of a crash of a top-secret military aircraft. The photographer, who had previously been assigned to take photos of atomic bomb tests, was quickly prepped for the mission, along with four other team members.

The photographer involved in this case first told his story anonymously in 1978, when he began sending a series of photographs and notes to Maryland UFO investigators. Fearing reprisal from the military even after thirty years, the photographer insisted on total anonymity before finally telling his incredible tale in 1980. Ron Schaffner, author of Tomato Man Revisited, said, “The source said that as a young naval photographer in 1948, he was flown to Mexico to document the crash of 90-foot diameter ‘flying saucer’ and its dead pilot. The photographer claimed he was

assigned to White Sands, New Mexico. Prior to the incident, he visited atomic test sites and photographed the after affects of the blasts."

Military Photo of Early Nuclear Test

According to the anonymous source, he and four others were loaded onto a special light observation and liaison monoplane aircraft, which likely was a Cessna forerunner of the Army L-19 Bird Dog, as the L-19 did not officially enter service until 1950.

The cramped, slow-moving airplane left White Sands, New Mexico at 9:30 p.m. At midnight, the small plane landed at an airfield in Del Rio, Texas, where it refueled before continuing its journey south. When it finally arrived at the crash site at 2:15 a.m. on July 8, the plane had completed its 800-mile flight in about five hours. The sight that awaited the team of photographers was beyond belief, according to Steinman and Stevens.

Army L-19 Bird Dog (USAF Photo)

"As they circled the floodlighted site before landing, they could see the remains of a fairly large circular craft still smoldering and smoking some twelve hours after the crash." As the plane circled in for a landing, the men on board could see, bathed by the artificial illumination, the eerie scene of the still-burning spacecraft, resting on the side of a brushy hill. The crash site was described as "a deserted valley surrounded by heavily vegetated hills rising a few hundred feet on three sides." The Navy photographer later told UFO researchers, "The entire hill side and valley below were littered with foil fragment."

The team of photographers from White Sands landed on a makeshift runway about a half-mile from the crash site and were picked up and driven right to the crash scene by an Army truck. The team met with a U.S. Naval Intelligence Officer from the U.S. Embassy in Mexico City, who had accompanied a delegation of Mexican government officials to the site. The officer instructed them to "photograph everything in as much detail as possible."

The photographers worked steadily until 4:30 a.m., when they

were finally allowed a break for breakfast at a makeshift campsite erected near the downed airship. Afterward, they were allowed to sleep for about three hours before being awakened and ordered to take more pictures in the daylight. They continued taking photos of the craft and its lone occupant until 1:00 p.m., by which time they had taken more than 500 exposures.

At 6:30 p.m., the White Sands photographers packed up their film and gear, and they were then taken to Alamogordo, New Mexico on a C-47.

The Navy photographer later returned to White Sands and began work on developing and printing the pictures, working as part of a team of photography specialists. “When they got back to White Sands, they were taken off all other duties for three weeks and spent all of their time developing negatives and making prints. No one else was allowed near their darkroom while they were working there. In fact, Marine guards were posted around the darkroom area to ensure security,” Steinman and Stevens reported.

Because the team was under constant watch by military security, the Navy photographer was unable to copy any of the photographs until years later. Shortly before he was to be transferred to another post, the photographer surreptitiously “borrowed” forty of the negatives, made copies of them, and then returned the originals.

Thus ends the account given to UFO researchers by the anonymous naval photographer. In the 1981 book, Casebook of a UFO Investigator, author Raymond E. Fowler discusses another former serviceman speaking out about a Laredo UFO crash in 1948. A retired Air Force colonel living in Florida said that a flying disc had crashed about 30 miles across the Mexican border from Laredo. After the U.S. military retrieved the wreckage, all persons involved in the recovery effort were told that if they ever said a word about the incident, they would be “the sorriest people around.”

The retired colonel also stated that a dead humanoid had been found inside the UFO. The creature was about four-and-a-half feet tall, completely hairless, and his hands had no thumbs. This description matches the creature shown in the “tomato man” photographs, which will be discussed in chapter five.

FOUR: THE FALLEN

In the original report on the incident filed with Mutual Anomaly Research Center and Evaluation Network (MARCEN), the crashed UFO is described as follows: “As best the source [the Navy photographer] could ascertain, the craft was nearly perfectly circular and was about 90 feet in diameter and about 28 feet in thickness at the center an tapering off to about 5 feet thick at the perimeter. There appeared to be five or six levels in the center of the craft, and they [the photographers] were told some sort of instrumentation and machinery was removed before they arrived. No propulsion system or mechanism was apparent to the source.”

An extremely interesting aspect of the Laredo 1948 crash is the widespread debris field that characterized the crash site. UFO researcher Willard McIntyre said, “The entire hill side and valley below were littered with foil fragment; very much like cigarette packages, only harder. The material could not be bent. All the fragments were confiscated by the military.”

Debris Field at Recent Aircraft Crash

An examination of the crash debris found several types of metallic fragments and structures with otherworldly properties. All of the material was carefully retrieved and loaded onto Army transport trucks.

Steinman and Stevens provide more detail about the debris, “What that team observed and photographed was an unearthly-shaped craft made up of earthly-looking debris. The basic structure looked as if it could have been built by earthly hands. Things were badly burned by the time the photographers got to the site, but they noticed a complete absence of any type of wiring, rubber, glass, plastics, wood, or paper products.”

“Our source noticed what were some supportive structures, which were held together by what appeared to be conventional bolts but when the mechanics attempted to unscrew them with wrenches, they would not turn at all. They had to be eventually chiseled off and the metal was very hard. The Army was using carbide and diamond drills and diamond saws for the final disassembly. There appeared to be two kinds of metal involved. The first and most abundant could not be cut by the oxy-acetylene cutting torches brought in. The second immediately began burning

when the cutting torches were used on it."

Military Operation to Recover Aircraft Crash Debris (USAF Photo)

The account in UFO Crash at Aztec continues, "The structural skin of the craft was apparently blown away in the explosion when the device crashed as the whole valley was littered with fragments of what appeared to be foil, very much like our cigarette packages, only much harder. You could not bend the material. Before anyone could leave the site, the MPs searched them and confiscated all fragments that had been collected."

McIntyre said, "There was an absence of any wiring, rubber, glass, plastic, wood, or paper. The structures were bound by normal looking bolts, but could not be unscrewed with conventional tools. Eventually, they were chiseled off. The metal was very hard. Diamond drills and saws were used for disassembly. Another metal was discovered which seemed to be a lighter grade and cutting torches were used."

The anonymous photographer stated that a metallurgist was brought in to determine the alloy of the crashed disc. After analyzing the disc, he said that the alloy had a "honey combed

crystalline structure" unlike anything known in Earth's technology. The metallurgist noted that the flying saucer construction might contain a form of silicon, thus accounting for its phenomenal hardness.

FIVE: UFO PILOT

Rumors have persisted over the years that the U.S. military recovered the body of at least one of the occupants of the flying disc that crashed near Laredo in 1948. Patricia Coloff, in her Texas Monthly article, said “The badly-burned inhabitant of the craft was significantly shorter in height than the average human and had unusually long arms.” She added that photos taken of the charred body showed an “extremely large head,” which led the press to refer to it as the “tomato man.”

In Crash at Aztec, the recovery of the body is described, “There was only one body, and it was badly burned at that, still in the structure. Our source photographed it in place in the structure as best as he could with the intense heat from the still smoldering remains and the burning hot sand. After they had taken photos of the entire scene and attempted to use multiple flash guns and a tripod to record the overall scene from a nearby hillside, the Air Force crash and rescue firemen on the scene dragged the body from the craft and put it on a nearby bank so they could photograph it away from the intense heat.”

Alleged Photo of Laredo UFO Occupant
(Willard McIntyre-Charles Wilhelm)

Willard McIntyre stated, "There was one body found within the craft. The photographers managed to get a series of pictures even though there was intense heat. When the object cooled down, the body was removed to a hillside and another series of pictures were taken." The body appeared to have been clothed in a metallic-like material, most of which had been burned away.

The McIntyre account continued, "The body was said to be four feet six inches long with a head extremely large compared to the rest of the torso. The eyes were gone and there were no visible ears, nose or lips with just a slit where teeth and a tongue would be. The arms appeared much longer than a human and the hands had four claw-like appendages."

Steinman and Stevens added, "Its head was extremely large for the body size by human proportions. The eyes were gone from the fire, but the eye sockets were much larger than in humans and were almost wraparound as if to give 180-degree vision. There were no visible ears or nose, but there were openings where ears and nostrils would have been in humans. There were no lips and the

mouth was just a sort of slit with no teeth or tongue. There were two legs of normal proportions with short feet having no discernable toes. The two arms were longer than in humans and the hands had four claw-like fingers each with no apparent thumbs. The arms and legs appeared to have joints in approximately the same places as in humans."

Significantly, the "large head and small body" description closely fits that of an alien that was reportedly recovered in the crash of a UFO near Mexico City in December of 1949. The Mexico City alien was estimated to be about two feet tall, which is half the size of the Laredo UFO occupant.

The account in Crash at Aztec states that two Army doctors arrived at the crash site during the morning of July 8, and they made a "superficial" forensic examination of the body. As the anonymous Navy photographer snapped pictures of the procedure, he listened to the astonished doctors remarking about how the UFO occupant's anatomy differed from human beings. In addition to having no teeth or tongue, the creature's mouth was not connected by any visible canal or duct to any kind of digestive system. Also, the doctors could find no evidence of reproductive organs in the human sense.

Alleged Photo of Laredo UFO Occupant
(Willard McIntyre-Charles Wilhelm)

The examining doctors compared the body tissue, which was extremely smooth and gray in color, to the tissue of a human female breast. In addition, the doctors found no evidence of musculature in the body's extremities. In fact, they found no muscle fiber anywhere in the torso. They theorized that the creature relied on its highly complex bone structure to move its extremities, as opposed to relying on muscles as humans do. Also, the hands had four digits each, which were longer than human fingers, and the hands tapered to an almost claw-like appearance at the tip. To their amazement, the doctors discovered that the right "arm" had a metallic joint at the elbow. Also, there were no opposing digits like thumbs.

The entire abdomen was encased by a rib-like structure all the way to the hips. The "legs" terminated in a blunt stump with no toes evident.

Upon further examination of the body, the doctors concluded that there was no evidence of hair or hair follicles anywhere on the

body. The doctors did find what looked like veins, but the fluid therein was colorless "with a slight green cast and a strong sulfurous odor."

The two photographs of the fallen pilot submitted to UFO researchers by the anonymous naval photographer were subjected to close scrutiny by several photographic laboratories, including Eastman Kodak, and their age was found to be consistent with the date in question, 1948. The lab tests also found no evidence of any photographic trickery, such as double exposure. Further studies of the prints using computer analysis were conducted by a Phoenix, Arizona UFO group called Ground Saucer Watch. Having concluded that the photos appeared to be genuine, the various UFO researchers involved made them public in 1980, and the Associated Press disseminated them to media outlets throughout the world.

An April 29, 1980 story written by Terry Kinney of the Associated Press was titled "Man Says He Has Proof Aliens Have Visited U.S." In the article, Kinney interviewed Maryland UFO researcher Charles Wilhelm, who told him that the military photographer who took the photos of the 1948 crash was still in the military in 1980 and would not reveal his identity for fear of reprisal.

Kinney quoted the anonymous serviceman as stating, "I do feel that it is my duty to warn you that once you begin the dissemination of the photos, you may find yourself the subject of harassment and even abuse, perhaps by an agency of the government that you never even suspected existed."

Since 1980, however, doubts have arisen about the authenticity of the data provided by the anonymous Navy photographer. Some minor factual errors may have resulted from faulty memory. For example, the account makes reference to a "Dias Air Force Base" in Texas. This might be a reference to Dyess AFB near Abilene, but unfortunately, Dyess did not exist until 1956. The account also

mentions two military aircraft, the Lockheed F-94 and the Army L-19, which were not in full use by the military until after 1948. The Lockheed F-94 may have actually been a Lockheed F-80, the immediate predecessor of the F-94. And, the L-19 may have been a Cessna monoplane that was in use before the L-19.

The photographs of the alleged alien body have also been called into question. A few researchers have concluded that the "tomato man" photographs are outright hoaxes, while others have suggested that the photos are actually of a human pilot who died in the crash of an aircraft and whose body was so badly burned that it is hardly recognizable as human. They say the photos reveal recognizable objects at the crash site such as the wire frames of eyeglasses or sunglasses.

In his 1995 book A History of UFO Crashes, Kevin D. Randle classifies the entire Laredo event as a hoax on the basis of his own personal examination of the two "tomato man" photographs, stating, "The body is apparently that of a human pilot killed when his plane crashed and burned. The lack of hair and the enlarged head are the result of the fire." Pamela Coloff, in her Texas Monthly article, agrees with Randle that the "alien" in the photographs was likely a human pilot who was burned beyond recognition in an airplane crash.

Coloff states in her article, "Government papers now indicate that the Air Force was experimenting at that time with V-2 rockets, nicknamed 'foo-fighters,' hence the crashed experimental aircraft that the photographer was instructed to document. One unresolved question is whether the pilot was actually a man or a monkey; the latter would explain the rumor that the pilot was short in stature with extremely long arms."

Still other researchers believe the "tomato man" was a test flight monkey that was shot up into the atmosphere in a V-2 rocket or other experimental aircraft. A problem with the monkey hypothesis

is that UFO investigators have researched the history of U.S. military rocket launches carrying experimental animals, and none correspond with the time frame of the Laredo UFO crash. Also, the only monkeys launched in rockets during this era were Rhesus monkeys, which are never taller than two feet. The “tomato man” photographs depict a taller creature.

Despite all the attacks that have been made against the validity of the “tomato man” photos, UFO believers continue to view the July 1948 event near Laredo as the possible crash of an extraterrestrial spacecraft. Charles Wilhelm, who released the “tomato man” photos to the Associated Press in 1980, said, “There have been numerous crashes over the years. Some spacecraft that landed because of malfunctions have been retrieved fully intact. The government denies that they have alien bodies in their possession, but we have testimony from former military personnel who saw them. We've talked to a couple of pathologists who did autopsies on the bodies.”

SIX: CRASH RETRIEVAL

According to the mysterious, unnamed source, an Air Force C-47 transport plane arrived at the scene of the UFO crash at 1 p.m. on July 9, 1948. The charred corpse found at the scene was packaged and placed on the C-47 for transport to a destination unknown to the source.

Meanwhile, all of the wreckage of the crashed disc was carefully gathered and loaded onto both U.S. military trucks and a few Mexican trucks. The trucks headed north toward Nuevo Laredo, but their final destination was not known to the source. Steinman and Stevens, in their book Crash at Aztec, suggest that the trucks may have been headed to the San Antonio Air Depot.

In the mid-1970s, Jim Lorenzen, a Tucson, Arizona UFO researcher and co-founder of the Aerial Phenomena Research Organization (APRO), located a person who claimed to know something about a crashed flying disc being taken to San Antonio in 1948. The anonymous source told Lorenzen that in 1948, when she was seven years old, her father worked at the San Antonio Air Depot, and one night, she overheard her father talking in hushed tones to some men from the base about a startling object that had been delivered to them.

Douglas C-47D “Skytrain” (USAF Photo)

Although the young girl had specifically been instructed by her father to remain upstairs that evening, she became thirsty and made her way quietly to the kitchen, where her dad and the other men had spread out some photographs, notes, and sketches. Since the men had temporarily moved out to the living room, the girl was able to look at the pictures and documents. What she saw stunned her and remained as a vivid memory in her mind for the rest of her life.

According to Steinman and Stevens, “The pictures were of a circular metal machine, a thick disc with a curved top and bottom, big, like an airplane, on the cement floor inside a building. It was leaning over on one side, and was propped up on the other side with wooden cribbing to keep it tipped over to the one side. There was an opening in the bottom, with some parts lying in a cloth near it. All of the pictures were of the same object from different angles and perspectives.”

Frightened by the eerie photos, the girl did not ask her father about them for many years, and when she finally did ask, he told her that he could not talk about it because of the oaths of secrecy he had sworn to the government. Even long after her dad had retired from the military and was a very old man, he refused to speak

about the object that was depicted in the strange photographs that the girl saw back in 1948.

In Crash at Aztec, Steinman and Stevens claim that a physics professor from the University of Texas at Austin was summoned to the San Antonio Air Depot sometime after the 1948 Laredo crash and was shown the very same object that the little girl had seen in her father's photographs. Years later, the professor told a UFO researcher that he saw a large circular object that had been tilted over to one side and was completely covered with a canvas, except for a small area underneath, which the professor was allowed to examine. An expert in metallurgy, the professor concluded the metal he examined that day was not of this earth.

A final piece of evidence suggesting that the 1948 Laredo incident really did happen was reported by UFO researcher Wendelle C. Stevens, who was told in 1980 by a high-ranking official of the British government that the British knew of a UFO crash retrieval conducted by the U.S. military south of Laredo, Texas, in 1948. The Honorable Brinsley Le Pour Trench, who was then the head of the English House of Lords Special Study Group, revealed verbally to Stevens that the original source of the information had been Hugh Dowding, Commander in Chief of the British Royal Air Force from 1933 to 1941.

Sir Hugh Dowding, British UFO Believer
(Courtesy of Wikipedia)

Interestingly, later in life, Dowding became one of the British establishment's leading proponents of the existence of UFOs. On July 11, 1954, he told London's Sunday Dispatch, "I am convinced that these objects exist and that they are not manufactured by any nation on Earth. I can therefore see no alternative to accepting the theory that they come from some extraterrestrial source."

Although the story of the Laredo crash effectively ends here, there is an interesting footnote in this amazing event. In the months and years followed the alleged crash of a UFO near Roswell in 1947 and near Laredo in 1948, U.S. government and military officials steadfastly denied that any such incidents had ever occurred.

However, a prominent U.S. scientist did make some interesting admissions about two years after the reported Laredo event. On September 15, 1950, physicist Robert Sarbacher, a Defense Department consultant, was asked if there was any truth to the rumor that the U.S. government had successfully recovered the

remains of crashed unidentified flying objects. Sarbacher replied on the record, “All we know is we didn’t make them, and it’s pretty certain they didn’t originate on the earth.” When asked about the government secrecy surrounding flying saucers, Sarbacher commented, “It is classified two points higher even than the H-bomb. In fact, it is the most highly classified subject in the U.S. government at the present time.”

When interviewed much later (in the 1980s), Sarbacher admitted that he had seen information about UFO crash recoveries cross his desk while working at the Defense Department in the late 1940s and early 1950s. He said that “certain materials reported to have come from flying saucer crashers were extremely light and very tough.”

The physicist added, “There were reports that instruments or people operating these machines were also of very light weight, sufficient to withstand the tremendous deceleration and acceleration associated with their machinery.”

Perhaps the most stunning statement made by Sarbacher, however, was that the government once offered to show him UFO wreckage and bodies, but he was not able to attend the meeting. Sarbacher said that during a high-level meeting at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Ohio, Air Force investigators planned to discuss what they had learned from research conducted on UFO artifacts and bodies stored at that facility.

If, as Sarbacher stated, the government has recovered crashed UFOs over the years, it is possible that some of the material came from the Laredo crash of 1948 or other Texas-Mexico crash retrievals.

SEVEN: INVESTIGATION

Another physicist with connections to a possible UFO crash recovery in northern Mexico in 1948 was Nobel-prize winner Luis W. Alvarez, one of America's foremost scientists in the 1940s and 1950s. During his wide-ranging career, he invented key wartime radar systems for the U.S. military, helped birth the atomic bomb, and developed a liquid-hydrogen bubble chamber that allowed close study of atomic particles. What is particularly intriguing about Alvarez, however, is that, in addition to his work in physics, he had a passion for exploring the hidden mysteries of the universe, as is evident from the fact that he used his scientific know-how to delve into UFOs, the Egyptian pyramids, the John F. Kennedy assassination, and the extinction of the dinosaurs.

In the late 1970s, Alvarez stunned scientists throughout the world by advancing the theory that dinosaurs were wiped out when either comets or asteroids collided with the earth, thus changing the planet's atmosphere. Although the theory was initially criticized and even ridiculed by some, it has since gained widespread acceptance.

Dr. Luis W. Alvarez (U.S. Government Photo)

Following Alvarez's death in 1988, a colleague told the Associated Press, "Luis Alvarez was a stunningly creative individual. His discoveries and inventions spanned an amazing range of the frontiers of man's knowledge over more than half a century."

Alvarez's military contract work early in his career led to him becoming a staunch supporter and defender of the U.S. military and its initiatives over the years. Consequently, the U.S. government often used Alvarez as a consultant on special projects, such as the Central Intelligence Agency's Scientific Advisory Panel on Unidentified Flying Objects, also known as the "Robertson Panel," of 1953.

During their deliberations, Alvarez and the other Panel members looked at several specific UFO cases from the 1940s and 1950s (pre-selected by the CIA), none of which seemed overly impressive to them. The Panel upheld the standard CIA position that the specific UFO cases they looked at had normal, rational explanations based on scientific fact. While "none of the members of the Panel were loath to accept that this earth might be visited by extraterrestrial intelligent beings of some sort, some day," they concluded there was no proof of extraterrestrial visitation. Their negative finding was based merely on the few specific UFO cases

that the Panel examined in 1953.

But the most significant thing about the Robertson Panel is its strong recommendation that the U.S. government engage in "debunking" UFO stories in order to prevent Russia from somehow using the American public's strong interest in UFOs for propaganda purposes. The Panel recommended the strategy of immediately countering stories about UFO sightings with scientific analysis designed to remove the allure of the unknown. The Panel concluded, "As in the case of conjuring tricks, there is much less stimulation if the 'secret' is known. Such a [debunking] program should tend to reduce the current gullibility of the public and consequently their susceptibility to clever hostile propaganda." The Panel reiterated its fear that the UFO phenomenon provided the Soviet Union with "so many obvious possibilities for exploitation."

The Robertson Panel further recommended the use of the national media to "debunk" UFO stories. Disney cartoons were cited as a clever way to attack the credibility of UFO sightings. The Panel also suggested employing the services of psychologists "familiar with mass psychology" and amateur astronomers to aid in debunking UFOs.

Clearly, Cold War tensions were a major motivator for the U.S. government's desire to closely guard UFO secrets in the late 1940s and early 1950s. It is also clear that, despite official claims that the Panel's recommendations were never actually implemented, its debunking policy eventually became deeply engrained in the culture of how the U.S. government dealt with UFO sightings. The entire document with the conclusions and recommendations of the Robertson Panel is available as Appendix D of this book.

In the years following the Robertson Panel's work, the name of Panel Member Luis W. Alvarez became linked with the supposed crash retrieval of a UFO in the Sierra Madre Oriental Mountains of northeastern Mexico in circa 1948. Some researchers have

suggested that the crashed UFO may actually have been the Laredo 1948 case.

The reported UFO crash site, about 25 miles west-northwest of Zapata county, is located in the foothills that comprise the beginning of the Sierra Madre Oriental mountain range. Steinman and Stevens state, "This [Laredo UFO crash] site was about 30 miles SSW of Laredo, not far from the highway to Mexico City, and near where the Rio Sabinas joins the Rio Salado before they empty into the Rio Grande, in the Sierra Madre Oriental. Is this the site in the Sierra Madre mountains of Nuevo Leon, where Dr. [Luis] W. Alvarez, a physicist from the University of California in Los Angeles, together with other scientists, was taken in July of 1948 to examine the residue on site of a crashed 100 foot diameter circular flying vehicle of unknown origin?"

The crash of a flying saucer in the Sierra Madre Oriental in the late 1940s is also mentioned in Ryan Wood's 2005 book Majic Eyes Only: Earth's Encounters with Extraterrestrial Technology. According to Wood, the incident was first reported by Sam Petok, in the November 1949 edition of the Los Angeles Free Press. Petok's source was a Los Angeles businesswoman named Alma Lawson, who claimed to have received information about the crash from an unnamed friend of hers, described only as a "sober and conservative" scientist.

Many years later, William Steinman, co-author of Crash at Aztec, claimed that Lawson told him the scientist who confided in her about a UFO crash in the Sierra Madres was none other than Nobel Laureate Luis W. Alvarez. Steinman wrote Alvarez a letter in 1984, asking for more information, but no reply was ever received. Steinman remarked in Crash at Aztec, "When Dr. Alvarez was finally located again and contacted on this matter by the author of this work, he refused to comment on the matter or to

discuss it in any way. We had expected no more than the reaction we got, because many we were contacting had already been approached by security and been re-briefed on their security oaths and the penalties for violation. Very few were willing to talk about the subject with us."

The same crash retrieval is mentioned in Jerome Clark's 1998 The UFO Book: Encyclopedia of the Extraterrestrial. Clark stated, "An intact flying saucer had gone down in a mesa deep in Mexico's Sierra Madre. Inside it were the burned bodies of six occupants, humanlike in appearance but none taller than 30 inches. Soon afterwards [Alma] Lawson's scientist friend, accompanied by several University of California physicists, visited the site. The UFO, 100 feet in diameter and turtle-shaped with 'a dirigible-like suspended cabin about 15 feet long,' was composed of a brownish material 'so hard a hacksaw could not cut it.'"

General Area of Crash

Interestingly, the Sierra Madre Oriental has long been a source of strange tales about flying objects, mysterious beings, unexplained lights, and other phenomena. There have arisen groups from time to time the claim that this mountain range may serve as a

secret base for UFO activities in North America.

EIGHT: MEXICO'S ROLE

Miguel Alemán Valdez served as Mexico's president from 1946 to 1952. His term in office corresponded with that of Harry S. Truman, who was the U.S. President from 1945 to 1953. When Miguel Alemán and Truman held talks in Mexico City during March 3-5, 1947, it was the first time an American President officially visited the capital. The visit was a friendly one, and discussions were held on several topics, including U.S. loans to foreign countries and outbreaks of a disease affecting livestock in both countries. Some researchers think that the topic of UFOs may also have come up between the two men when meeting in private.

Speaking in Mexico's National Palace on March 3, in a nationwide radio broadcast, Truman said, "International relations have traditionally been compared to a chess game in which each nation tries to outwit and checkmate the other. I cannot accept that comparison with respect to the relations between your country and mine, Mr. President [Miguel Alemán]. The United States and Mexico are working together for the mutual benefit of their peoples and the peace of the world. You have made me feel, what I could not have doubted in any case, that I stand here, in the midst of the great people of Mexico, as a trusted friend and a welcome guest."

Miguel Alemán (left) meets with Harry S. Truman in 1947 (Truman Presidential Library)

Truman's historic visit to Mexico City in March was followed by a reciprocal visit by Miguel Alemán to Washington, DC two months later, from April 29 to May 1. This was the first time a Mexican President officially visited the United States capital. On May 1, he delivered a historic address in a joint meeting of the U.S. Congress.

In the Library of Congress Country Studies, the Alemán presidency is described as follows: "One of Alemán's first acts as president was to reaffirm amicable postwar relations between Mexico and the United States. In a symbolic gesture of rapprochement, United States President Harry S. Truman and Mexican President Alemán visited each other's countries. On September 2, 1947, Mexico was among the signatories of the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance (Rio Treaty), which outlined a system of mutual defense on the part of Western Hemisphere nations against outside aggression."

Mexican Army Units in Mexico City Parade
(U.S. Air Force Photo)

It is extremely interesting to UFO researchers that three important Mexican crash retrieval events (Laredo 1948, Mexico City 1949, and Del Rio 1955) all occurred during this era of improved relations between Mexico and the United States. In all three crashes, the administration of Miguel Alemán Valdez seems to have cooperated with the Truman White House.

In the 1948 crash near Laredo, Mexican troops stood down, allowing the Americans full access to the crash site. In the 1955 crash near Del Rio, the Mexican soldiers reportedly secured the area of the crash, waited for the U.S. troops to arrive, and then turned the crash scene over to the Americans. In the 1949 crash near Mexico City, the Mexicans were said to have allowed a number of U.S. military officials to visit the crash site.

In yet another interesting fact about the relationship between Miguel Alemán and Harry S. Truman, both men were members of the Freemasons in their respective countries. Truman even rose to the rank of Grand Master.

Although Miguel Alemán had already left Mexico's highest political office by the time Dwight Eisenhower became U.S.

president in 1953, he communicated with Eisenhower on occasion, including at a “summit of ex-presidents” held in January of 1963.

In 1982, Leonard Stringfield reported that former Mexican president Miguel Alemán claimed that Eisenhower once told him an amazing story about UFOs. Eisenhower claimed he had visited an air base in the Southwestern United States where he was shown a recovered flying saucer and its dead crew.

In his UFO Crash/Retrieval Status Report III, Stringfield revealed a letter written by a UFO researcher from Madrid, Spain named Antonio Ribera. According to Ribera, a friend of his attended a gathering in Mexico in 1970 at which one of the guests was former Mexican President Miguel Alemán Valdez. The evening’s conversation turned to the subject of unidentified flying objects, which caused the former president to listen attentively but say nothing. When one of the guests noticed that Miguel Alemán had not given his opinion, he asked the former president what he thought about flying saucers.

Harry S. Truman (left) and General Dwight D. Eisenhower (right). (Eisenhower Presidential Library)

Alemán's response most certainly shocked everyone at the table that evening, as he revealed that during a meeting with Dwight D. Eisenhower, the former U.S. President had told Alemán that he had once been taken to a military base and shown a crashed flying saucer and its dead occupants.

In his letter to Stringfield, Ribera stated, "Eisenhower told him [Alemán] that he once visited an air base in the Southwest United States where they showed him a flying disc and the cadavers of several of its crew members."

Skeptics argue that Eisenhower was not the U.S. President when Miguel Alemán was in office; however, the meeting between Alemán and Eisenhower may have taken place after Alemán left office. Former presidents in Mexico continue to use the title of president even after their term ends, as is also the practice in the United States. The Alemán-Eisenhower meeting might even have taken place in January 1963 when the two former presidents met in Washington, D.C. for a series of talks.

Regardless of when the meeting took place, the story that Eisenhower supposedly told Alemán about having seen a crashed UFO and its occupants is incredible indeed. Given that the Alemán presidency was a time of great UFO activity in both Mexico and the United States, this remains an intriguing story.

NINE: MISSILES INTO MEXICO

Skeptics have suggested that stories of a Northern Mexico UFO crash retrieval may be nothing more than folktales resulting from incidents where U.S. military missiles went astray and crashed into Mexico. While it is true that there have been three or four accidental missile crashes in Mexico, the authors do not believe that these stray missiles are sufficient to explain away the UFO crash retrieval reports that have been mentioned this book. However, because the missile events do serve to shed light on the UFO stories, we will fully explore the documentary evidence behind the known cases of U.S. missiles crashing in Northern Mexico.

The missile cases yield valuable insight into how the U.S. and Mexico have dealt with crash retrieval scenarios. Like the UFO events, the missile crashes brought the two governments into diplomatic dialogue regarding the recovery of the crashed objects. During suspected UFO crash retrievals, the U.S. has been accused of claiming to be engaged in recovering a fallen missile or experimental aircraft in order to hide the truth about crashed UFOs.

Werner Von Braun Holds a V-2 Model (NASA Photo)

The first confirmed crash of a U.S. missile in Mexico occurred during the very early days of U.S. rocket research. In the mid 1940s, thousands of V-2 rocket parts taken from the Germans after World War II were shipped to Fort Bliss, Texas and White Sands, New Mexico, where they were used to build America's early missile arsenal. A team of captured German rocket scientists, including future NASA wizard Werner Von Braun, worked at a makeshift Fort Bliss camp to re-create and expand the rocket work they had done for Adolf Hitler.

V-2 Rocket Launch from White Sands (U.S. Air Force Photo)

On May 29, 1947 at 8:30 p.m., Von Braun's team launched one of their 46-foot tall rockets from a White Sands firing site at Tularosa Basin, located 44 miles north of El Paso, Texas. The rocket was supposed to fly north for 40 miles and then come down still within the White Sands compound. Instead, after a gyroscope failure, the missile spun around almost 180 degrees and veered south into Mexico. The New York Times reported, "It soared into the night sky, but instead of arching northward into the desert, it backtracked, roared southward over El Paso and fell with a loud explosion somewhere south of the Rio Grande."

The rocket, which was the twenty-eighth V-2 test missile to be launched in the U.S., was traveling at more than 1,000 miles per hour when it slammed into the ground just south of Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua, near the Tepeyac Cemetery. The U.S. Army later identified the V-2 as "Missile 0 of the Hermes series."

According to the Chicago Daily Tribune, the resulting explosion and rising column of smoke led many residents of the area to believe that an atomic bomb had landed nearby. The 200,000 residents of El Paso-Juarez were so shaken that many of them made panicked phone calls to their local police and media, causing telephone circuits to become hopelessly jammed. "Women knelt praying in the streets, excited motorists smashed autos, and many persons believed an atom bomb had hit," said the newspaper.

"Juarez eyewitnesses reported 'a blinding flash of light' followed by a tremendous pressure wave, followed by the appearance of a mushroom cloud," according to an account in J. Andrew Kissner's Peculiar Phenomenon: Early United States Efforts to Collect and Analyze Flying Discs. "The mushroom cloud excited local rumors that an atomic bomb had exploded. The concussion of the blast was sufficient to crack windows six miles

north of the crash site, while an electric clock stopped, apparently due to some blast effect at the El Paso County Sheriff's Office. The ground shock generated by the explosion was felt 35 miles northwest of the impact crater."

"Lt. Colonel Harold R. Turner, White Sands commandant, said the modified V-2 rocket, fired at 8:30 p.m. had deviated from its set northerly course because of a failure in its German-made gyroscope. The explosion occurred about three minutes later," the Chicago Daily Tribune said. Mexican officials in Juarez reported no casualties and no property damage.

The Los Angeles Times quoted Harold R. Turner as saying that a gyroscope that should have controlled the V-2 on its 40-mile flight from one end of the range to the other somehow became reversed. Instead of heading north, the V-2 shot off to the south. A civilian technician at White Sands misread data and failed to hit the abort switch that would have remotely cut off the rocket's fuel and would have brought it down in the desert within 25 miles of the launch point.

Turner told the newspaper, "It's a miracle no one was killed or even injured. If the missile had impacted in a residential area in Juarez, it could have been a major disaster."

On the morning after the crash, even as U.S. diplomats in Mexico City delivered an apology, hundreds of Mexicans and Texans gathered around what the New York Times described as "the great crater that was scooped out by the rocket in the rocky knob of a little mesa near a cemetery and the Juarez airfield, about three to four miles from the Juarez-El Paso bridges."

Newspaper reports indicated that U.S. military recovery teams headed to Juarez by air and by ground immediately after the crash. Kissner says, "MPs stationed at Ft. Bliss and other U.S. Army personnel from WSPG [White Sands Proving Grounds] rushed across the border into Mexico in an attempt to secure the downed

object. They were met at the crater by Mexican troops and summarily evicted. Mexico's General Enrique Diaz Gonzalez commanded the Juarez Garrison. Gen Gonzalez placed Juarez off limits to U.S. Army personnel for several weeks after the explosion."

According to Kissner, the crashed missile was totally vaporized, leaving only small shreds of "burned gray metal fused with molten sand and rock" around the 50' x 50' x 24' crater. The Mexican military's recovery efforts yielded only enough debris to fit comfortably on top of a single desk.

The Second Crash

A second V-2 crash reportedly occurred five months later in nearly the same spot, although the U.S. military never admitted that the second object was one of theirs. The mystery missile fell from the sky on October 12, 1947, landing in a hilly area near Guadalupe, Chihuahua, Mexico, about ten miles from the site of the May 29 incident.

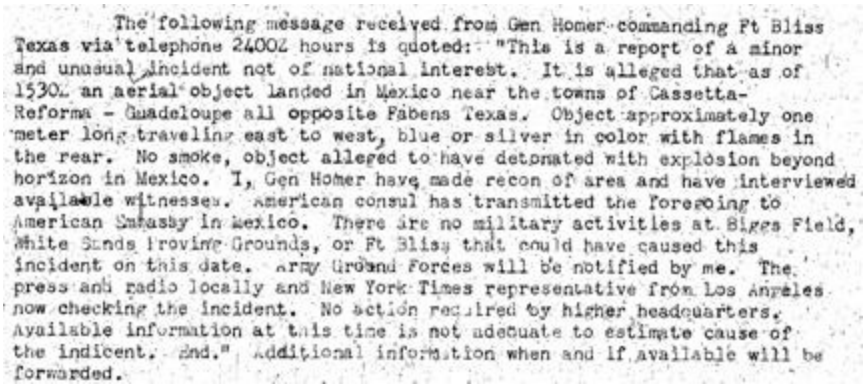
"An unidentified flaming object soared over the Texas-Mexico border today, apparently smashing into the Samalayuca Mountains of Mexico with a loud explosion and billows of smoke," the Associated Press reported. "The approximate imact area was estimated to be less than 10 miles from the point where a V-2 rocket off its track, crashed south of Juarez May 29. At least four persons saw the fiery object darting through the skies 'with the speed of a falling star' at approximately 9:30 a.m."

An eyewitness told the Chicago Daily Tribune that he was standing at a filling station in Guadalupe at about 9:30 a.m. when he observed a brilliant light about 100 feet up in the sky moving rapidly from east to west and trailing a blue flame. The witness, a retired Mexican army officer, said the object "looked like a

meteor."

The object impacted the earth with a booming noise and a towering plume of smoke. The impact site was at a point across the Rio Grande River from Fabens, Texas. A recently declassified Army report described the UFO as "a mysterious object which blazed through the sky, crashed and apparently exploded in the mountains near the village of Caseta, Mexico, across the Rio Grande from Fabens, Texas."

The Associated Press said, "It was reported to have come from the direction of the United States, and it produced a sizeable crater on impact. Members of the Mexican Army who visited the site stated that the object was another V-2 similar to the May 29 incident, and the Mexican War Department issued a statement repeating the claim." The U.S. Army's report on the matter added, "The War Department in Mexico City asserted … that investigation indicated the object was a V-2 rocket launched from a U.S. Army experimental station in Texas."



The following message received from Gen Homer commanding Ft Bliss Texas via telephone 2400Z hours is quoted: "This is a report of a minor and unusual incident not of national interest. It is alleged that as of 1530Z an aerial object landed in Mexico near the towns of Cassetta-Reforma - Guadeloupe all opposite Fabens Texas. Object approximately one meter long traveling east to west, blue or silver in color with flames in the rear. No smoke, object alleged to have detonated with explosion beyond horizon in Mexico. I, Gen Homer have made recon of area and have interviewed available witnesses. American consul has transmitted the foregoing to American Embassy in Mexico. There are no military activities at Biggs Field, White Sands Proving Grounds, or Ft Bliss that could have caused this incident on this date. Army Ground Forces will be notified by me. The press and radio locally and New York Times representative from Los Angeles now checking the incident. No action required by higher headquarters. Available information at this time is not adequate to estimate cause of the indicent. End." Additional information when and if available will be forwarded.

Excerpt from U.S. Army Report 10-13-47 (Project Blue Book)

U.S. military officials, however, claimed that no U.S. rockets or aircraft of any kind were responsible for the Guadalupe crash. According to an AP report, a spokesman for the White Sands Missile Range said no missiles had been launched from there since October 9. "Major General John L. Homer, Fort

Bliss commander and military officials at air fields and other installations in the Southwest, said that no guided missiles had been fired today and no rocket planes were missing from the fields in the area."

The crash site itself failed to yield any debris or clues of any kind other than the impact crater. The U.S. military reiterated that none of its installations had launched any sort of rocket or missile on October 12.

In a recently declassified memo from the U.S. National Archives, the U.S. military attaché in Mexico City wrote the following on October 16, 1947: "A mysterious object which fell near Guadalupe, Chihuahua (48 km Southeast of El Paso) on 12 October has been the source of much speculation in the press. According to a sergeant of the 35th Infantry Battalion who visited the crater and reported to the 5th Zone Commander, the object was a V-2. With this as a basis, Defense Nacional announced officially that it was a V-2 similar to the one which fell near Ciudad Juarez on 29 May 1947. General Homer, commanding Fort Bliss, has categorically stated that no V-2 was fired on that date. A-1 comment: It is believed that the Mexican Army source is incompetent to make a declaration as to whether it was or was not a V-2 but an official U.S. Government announcement seems required at this time, as sovereignty of Mexican soil in involved."

Days later, apparently after high level negotiations between the two governments, Mexican officials began backing off from their earlier statements that the crashed object was another V-2 rocket. The concept that it was a fallen meteorite suddenly gained favor.

An October 16 U.S. Army press release announced, "Gen. Enrique Diaz Gonzales, who commands the Juarez military garrison just across the border from El Paso, today blamed a 'false report' for the Mexican War Department's announcement that an American rocket landed south of here last Sunday."

20 Years Later

It was twenty years before another piece of U.S. military hardware was confirmed to have crashed in Mexico. In the first incident involving a missile designed to carry a nuclear payload, a medium-range Pershing ballistic missile spun out of control and crashed 200 miles south of the Texas-Mexico border in 1967.

Designed as a mobile missile, the Pershing featured two solid-fuel engine stages and an inertial guidance system. At the very top of the sharply tipped cone, the missile could carry up to a 400-kiloton nuclear warhead. The Pershing, which had a functional range of 460 miles, stood just over 34 feet tall and was slightly more than 3 feet in diameter.

On September 12, 1967, a Pershing I missile was launched from Blanding, Utah, on a heading that would cause it to crash on the grounds of the White Sands Missile Range in southern New Mexico. The missile's trajectory quickly deviated from what its planners had in mind.

Pershing Missile Launch (U.S. Army Photo)

The errant missile overshot its target in New Mexico, and crashed across the Rio Grande River, south of Van Horn, Texas, in the Mexican state of Chihuahua. The missile crashed approximately 250 miles farther south than intended, finally coming to rest in a remote stretch of Mexican desert, very close to the site of the reported 1974 Coyame UFO crash.

The New York Times reported, "A 10,000-pound Army Pershing missile fired from Utah went off course today and landed in Mexico. The Mexican Government gave the United States Government permission to send a helicopter across the Rio Grande to look for it."

"Officials at White Sands said that the supersonic, 35-foot-tall Pershing was capable of carrying a nuclear warhead but carried only an unarmed dummy warhead on today's training flight. No property damage or injuries were reported."

Arrow Marks Crash Site (Map Courtesy of the University of Texas Libraries, The University of Texas at Austin.)

The New York Times stated that earlier on the same day, West German Air Force troops had successfully launched a Pershing missile, which later crashed in White Sands, New

Mexico. The cause of failure for the U.S. Army's missile was unknown.

Quoted in the same article, the sheriff of Culberson County, Texas, said that the missile had crashed "near El Cuervo, about 20 miles into Mexico, 45 miles from Van Horn."

A day later, the New York Times reported that the U.S. Army helicopter search team failed to find "any trace" of the Pershing missile. About a week later, though, a Mexican rancher found metal debris in an area 50 miles southwest of Van Horn, Texas. The U.S. government again requested permission from the Mexicans to "inspect the area and remove any components that may be found."

Athena Missile Being Prepared for Launch (U.S. Air Force Photo)

After being granted permission, U.S. military officials, accompanied by Mexican ranchers, finally located and recovered "critical" components of the crashed missile from the Chihuahuan desert near El Cuervo. The drama of the fallen Pershing was ended.

The crash of the Pershing missile in Mexico created a bit of an international incident, as later admitted in a U.S. Army historical document by Jim Eckles. The U.S. government quickly mobilized its diplomatic corps to profusely apologize to the Mexicans and assure them that the event was merely an unavoidable accident.

Radioactive Missile Lands in Mexico

A much more serious diplomatic incident occurred three years later, when a U.S. missile carrying radioactive Cobalt 57 crashed in the desert near Ceballos, Durango, Mexico, about 200 miles south of the Texas border. It was after the crash of this missile that the desert around Ceballos gained notoriety as Mexico's "Zone of Silence."

The incident began with the firing of Athena missile number 122 on July 11, 1970 from an Air Force test facility in Green River, Utah. Standing 50 feet tall and weighing 16,000 pounds, the Athena was a scaled-down version of an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM). The Air Force used the Athena to study reentry characteristics of warheads and other space vehicles. Tests of full-scale ICBMs were only done at sea.

According to Jim Eckles' article "The Athena That Got Away," the missile's first two stages were designed to push the Athena to an altitude of about 200 miles. Once there, computers reoriented the missile so that it pointed down toward White Sands, New Mexico. At that point, stages three and four fired in sequence,

hurling the reentry vehicle back to earth at speeds of up to 15,250 miles per hour.

The flight of Athena number 122 proceeded without a hitch until reentry. Due to the communications blackout that occurs when any spacecraft is reentering the earth's atmosphere, flight controllers at White Sands were unable to detect that a deviation in course had occurred.

According to Eckles, a White Sands technician peeked outside, looking for the telltale glow of the Athena coming into the atmosphere toward White Sands. The technician was shocked to see the rocket's glare almost directly overhead and still streaking to the south toward Texas.

Still uncertain where exactly the missile had gone, White Sands personnel spent time searching the missile range and reviewing telemetry before finally concluding that the Athena must have gone down somewhere in Mexico. The July 12 edition of the Los Angeles Times quoted White Sands officials that "the missile probably landed in mountains 180 miles southeast of Chihuahua City about 400 miles worth of where it should have landed on the missile range." The article also noted that the Air Force was negotiating through diplomatic channels for permission to enter Mexico and search for the missile.

On July 13, Mexican federal troops, escorted by local ranchers, reportedly visited a debris field near Ceballos, Durango, where "chunks of metal were scattered across the desert." The U.S. Air Force grew even more eager to visit the crash area. The Washington Post reported, "The Air Force had said it believed the Athena's instrument-laden nose cone survived the crash but search crews were delayed in crossing the border by diplomatic protocol." White Sands spokesman Jim Lovelady said that after the missile crash, the U.S. had to wait patiently for Mexican approval, due to an agreement between the two countries.

In 1992, Andrea Kaus, an anthropology student from California, summarized what happened next, “Hardly anyone saw the rocket fall. A few shepherds in the hills thought perhaps an angel had fallen. A rancher living close by was frightened and then angered as his cattle broke out of the corrals in their panic. People in the towns attributed the flash of light to an unusually bright falling star or meteorite. Maybe nothing more would have been said, except that the U.S. government came looking for its wayward missile and did not want anyone to know about it. Consistent with governmental common sense, no one asked the rancher whose cattle had been spooked where the missile had landed, or even asked anyone residing in the general vicinity. Instead, people from Gomez-Palacio were hired to scour (quietly) the Bolson for the missing missile while U.S. planes scouted from the air. It was finally found after three weeks, buried nose-first in a sand dune.”

On July 16, a U.S. search team left White Sands headed for the reported crash site in Mexico. Eckles wrote, “By the time the group left on July 16, the data reduction folks deduced that the Athena was 450 miles into Mexico in a south-southeast direction in the area of the boundary between Durango and Chihuahua.”

On the recovery team was White Sands project engineer Carlos Bustamante, who was chosen apparently because he spoke Spanish. The team leader was Lt. Colonel Lowell “Buzz” Knight. Part of the team flew down to Mexico in two small contracted airplanes, while other team members drove to the crash area in two vehicles that were also to be used for the retrieval operation. The members of the team established a base in Torreon, Coahuila, the largest town in the area of the crash

.

Carlos Bustamante (U.S. Air Force Photo)

The Americans met with a Mexican team consisting of army personnel and scientists. Two Mexican army officers spoke English, and thus Bustamante's services as a translator were no longer required.

The U.S. team began flying reconnaissance missions over the surrounding open desert and mountainous terrain, while other team members interviewed local residents about what they saw or heard on July 11. The search quickly became tedious and protracted.

On July 29, Mexican Foreign Relations Secretary Antonio Carillo Flores announced that he had received assurances from the U.S. State Department that the Americans would not be firing any more Athena missiles until the problems that caused the July 11 crash were found and corrected.

The nose cone containing the radioactive Cobalt 57 was finally located on August 2 by a specially equipped aircraft on loan from the Atomic Energy Commission. An onboard scintillometer and spectrum analyzer allowed the crew to fix the exact position of the nose cone on the desert floor below. After the plane dropped sacks of flour to mark the way, the other members of the team, led by Bustamante, finally arrived at the nose cone debris.

The Athena Mexico Cleanup (U.S. Air Force Photo)

The team found a small crater area with just a few pieces of twisted metal and some contaminated sand. The Cobalt 57 contained in the nose cone was a very small amount that was used for testing and was not meant to be a weapon. The recovery crew detected a very low level of radioactivity at the site.

Although the radioactivity was extremely low, negotiations between the U.S. and Mexico resulted in an agreement for the Americans to remove most of the contaminated soil and to bury the rest. Thus, “Operation Sand Patch” was born, which by October 1, 1970, had removed sixty barrels of contaminated soil from the area.

On October 7, the radioactive soil arrived on the grounds of the White Sands Missile Range, marking the conclusion of Operation Sand Patch. The total cost of the recovery effort was $104,000.

The exact cause of the Athena’s guidance failure was never determined. Athena testing resumed in January of 1971 and continued through the summer of 1973.

Thus end the three known cases (and one suspected case) of U.S. military missiles crashing in Northern Mexico. Tales of crashed missiles and experimental aircraft could well have become a

convenient cover story for use when the U.S. military wanted to wrap a veil of secrecy over crashed objects that were truly unknown.

TEN: 1953 LAREDO UFO CRASH?

As the dust settled following the alleged crash of an extraterrestrial vehicle in July of 1948, the Laredo area was by no means in the clear with regard to UFOs. In fact, there was a rumor of another UFO crash in the Laredo area in 1953, although virtually no information about it has ever surfaced, and nobody seems to know the source of the original report.

UFO researcher Joe McKenzie, in his article "UFO Crashes in the United States," writes: "No crashed UFO list would be complete without this strange report of a UFO crash on June, 19, 1953 near Laredo, Texas where four alien bodies were supposedly recovered. Strangely, there appears no evidence, either solid or anecdotal, to support this report. Whether this event actually took place is highly suspect and one wonders if this report was the result of mixing it up with the earlier Laredo, Texas sighting of 1948, mistakenly re-copying it, and then having the report republished through the plethora of UFO crash lists that are so numerous on the Internet."

These lists of UFO crashes, which appear on hundreds of Web sites, usually contain the following simple notation regarding the alleged 1953 Laredo UFO crash: "June 19, 1953 - Laredo, Texas 4 Bodies." It is possible that some of the crashes appearing on these

lists were originally looked into by pioneering UFO researcher Leonard Stringfield, but that many of them, including the 1953 Laredo report, eventually did not pan out.

In Stringfield's 1978 publication, "Retrievals of the Third Kind - A Case Study of Alleged UFOs and Occupants in Military Custody," he mentions a number of reported UFO crashes that occurred in "a desert region of southwestern United States or Mexico" in and around 1953.

Stringfield wrote:

> Air Force Major named Daly - who was a metallurgist stationed at Wright-Patterson AFB in 1953… relates his adventures with a crashed UFO. The source for this information comes from fellow Cincinnati-based researcher, Charles Wilhelm. A friend of Charles' father, he related in 1968, that in April 1953 [the month could be wrong] he was flown to a destination unknown, where it was hot and sandy, to examine the crashed UFO. He was blindfolded and driven to a point about 30 minutes away from the base of operations. There, inside a tent, standing in soft sand, his blindfold was removed. From there he was taken to a location where he saw a silvery metallic craft about 25 to 30 feet in diameter. The exterior of the craft, he said, was not damaged. However, his on-the-spot two day analysis of the ship's metal, using the equipment he carried with him, showed that it was not native to Earth. Major Daly, although he was not permitted to enter the craft, observed that the craft's entrance measured four to five feet high and two to three feet wide.

In the same publication, Stringfield related the story of an Air Force general who claimed to have seen four alien bodies in deep freeze at Wright-Patterson Air Base in Ohio. He wrote:

> From the damaged craft, four humanoid bodies were recovered with great difficulty because of the inability to penetrate the craft's metal structure. The deceased bodies were found badly burned, some parts so severely that certain features were indistinguishable. However, the suits they wore - appearing silver - were not damaged by the obvious intense

heat endured inside the craft. Said the General, "The suits were fused to the flesh."

M. S. said, according to the General, the four bodies were approximately 5 feet in height and were sent to Wright-Patterson AFB where General T had seen them in a deep freeze morgue, kept at approximately 120 degrees below zero for preservation.

The only other anatomical feature described by General T was that the heads of the aliens were, by human standards, larger proportionately than the bodies. Facial features were erased by the heat factor.

Could Stringfield have been on the track of the Laredo UFO crash? Although we may never know for sure in the wake of Stringfield's death in 1994, it is fascinating to speculate.

As far as other Laredo UFO incidents, the Air Force's declassified Project Blue Book materials list many UFO sightings over the years in and around Laredo, including several shortly after the crash event. None of these is more compelling than an incident that appears to have very close to being yet another UFO crash.

Laredo AFB, Circa 1952 (Base Yearbook)

On December 4, 1952, U.S. Air Force pilot, Lieutenant Robert Arnold, was returning to Laredo Air Force Base after a two-hour training mission in a North American T-28 jet. At approximately

8:46 p.m., he radioed the Laredo AFB control tower for permission to land. However, due to conflicting air traffic, he was requested to circle at an altitude of 6,000 feet and to remain outside of the traffic pattern several miles away from the base.

While waiting his turn to land about 8 miles southwest of Laredo, Arnold noticed a bright bluish-white glowing light below his T-28 and climbing rapidly up to his level. The strange object had no position or navigation lights of any kind. As Arnold maneuvered his plane to keep the object in view, he saw the UFO zoom up to about 9,000 feet in just a few seconds and then back down to the same altitude as Arnold's T-28.

North American T-28A (USAF Museum)

1 - 15 DECEMBER 1952 SIGHTINGS

DATE	LOCATION	OBSERVER	EVALUATION
Dec 1	St Augustine, Florida	Kawe	Insufficient Data
4	Mitchel AFB, New York	Multiple	Astro (JUPITER)
4	Congaree AFB, South Carolina	Cd (RADAR)	Other (ELECTRONIC INTERFERENCE)
4	Colorado Springs, Colorado	Steele, Giles	A/C
4	Laredo AFB, Texas	Arnold	Balloon
4	Tanana, Alaska	(Native)	Astro (METEOR)
6	USSR (ATIC Document)(Probable Meteor Showers)(INFO)		

Excerpt from Project Blue Book Listing Showing Arnold's Sighting

The amazed pilot next applied full power in an attempt to chase the object, only to suddenly realize that the UFO had turned back toward him and was closing very fast. Realizing that he would not be able to turn out of the way in time, Arnold braced himself for the inevitable collision.

In his 1954 book, Flying Saucers from Outer Space, author

Donald E. Keyhole described what happened next, “Three hundred feet away, the machine wavered for a split second. Then it flashed to one side, hurtling past his right wing, so fast it was only a blur.”

Realizing his T-28 was seriously outmatched, Arnold turned off his running lights and spiraled down to 1,500 feet, while keeping the object in view. He noticed that the UFO headed towards him again before it pulled up and climbed out of sight. The object that exhibited such incredible power and speed while chasing and terrifying Lt. Arnold was officially classified as a “balloon” in the Project Blue Book report.

The entire Air Force report on the Arnold incident appears in Appendix A of this book.

ELEVEN: LAREDO UFO CONFERENCE

In 2011, the Webb County Heritage Foundation, a non-profit group in Laredo, Texas, announced it would host the city's first ever UFO conference, inspired in part by a revival of interest in the reported 1948 crash of a flying saucer just southwest of downtown Laredo. The conference was set for November 5 and featured as keynote speaker the world's most famous UFO abductee, Travis Walton. South Texas UFO researcher and author Noe Torres was also announced as a speaker.

Interest in the UFO conference was extremely high when it was first announced and continued growing until the day of the event. The New York Times reported, "A seminar on extraterrestrials in a South Texas border city nearly 1,500 miles from Area 51 may be unexpected, but the inaugural Laredo U.F.O. Conference looks to be the real deal."

The New York Times article quoted Margarita Araiza, executive director of the Webb County Heritage Foundation, as saying "once we put that up on the Web site, people started calling right away. We even had an inquiry from Ukraine."

Banners Announce Conference Entrance (Photo by Noe Torres)

Texas Monthly magazine included the Laredo UFO Conference in its "Drop Everything List" of must-see events for the state of Texas for November 2011. Meanwhile, announcements about the conference appeared on almost every major UFO-related Web site on the Internet.

A number of Laredo-area UFO sightings in the weeks prior to the conference certainly did not hurt ticket sales either. "Dozens of Laredo residents woke up to see a bright light in the sky that some say they just cannot explain," Laredo's KGNS-TV reported on August 23, 2011. "Many people are now saying what they saw was a UFO in the sky over south Laredo before four this morning. The light that seems like an ordinary star shone brightly over Laredo around four Tuesday morning. It's the second night in a row it's been spotted."

U.S. Military
transport plane arrived at the scene of the UFO crash at 1
was packaged and placed on the C-47 for transport to a
destination unknown to the source. ... Meanwhile, all of
the wreckage of the crashed disc was carefully gathered
and loaded onto both U.S. military trucks and a few
Mexican trucks. The trucks headed north toward Nuevo
Laredo but their final destination was not known to the
source. The wreckage may have been taken to the San
Noe Torres Speaks at 2011 Laredo UFO Conference

The report also noted, "Witnesses say it was flying around the south Laredo area, then flew back up to central Laredo towards loop twenty and then back around and down Highway 83 before it disappeared. Flying too low to be a commercial plane but was completely silent. Over 150 comments flooded [Facebook] commenting on the sighting that has believers intrigued."

The stage was set for Laredo's highly-anticipated first UFO conference, which was held at Texas A & M International University's Fine Arts Recital Hall. When November 5 arrived, close to 1,000 people attended the one-day conference.

The conference was kicked off by Ismael Cuellar of the Laredo Paranormal Research Society (LPRS), who presented his group's latest findings on UFO sightings in the Laredo area and also demonstrated the use of night vision technology in detecting nighttime UFOs cruising around the skies of Laredo.

Speakers Noe Torres (left) and Travis Walton (right)

Cuellar's talk was followed by a multimedia presentation by Noe Torres titled "Fallen Angel: UFO Crash near Laredo, Texas." Torres summarized the information which is given in this book, regarding a reported UFO crash near Laredo on July 7, 1948.

Torres then presented a lecture on "The Real Cowboys & Aliens: UFO Encounters of the Old West." Torres told his audience that "before the comic books and Hollywood blockbuster, cowboys in the American West really did report seeing unidentified flying saucers." Torres related several remarkable tales of these Wild West UFO sightings taken from his book, The Real Cowboys & Aliens.

Torres' third lecture was titled "1955 UFO Crash on the Texas-Mexico Border." Torres said in his presentation, "On a clear spring day in 1955, Air Force pilot Robert Willingham was flying an F-86 fighter jet across West Texas when he saw an object 'as bright as a star' streak past him and then execute a 90-degree turn going 2,000 miles per hour. Giving chase in his jet, the decorated World War II and Korean War veteran watched in awe as the object suddenly

plummeted to Earth near Del Rio, Texas. Soon after, he visited the crash site and saw a large, silver UFO impacted into the side of a sandy hill. Nothing could have prepared him for what happened next, as his life was about to change forever." The presentation included audio and video clips of Colonel Willingham, who is now in his eighties.

The Laredo conference was capped off by the keynote speaker, Travis Walton, who retold the amazing story of being abducted by extraterrestrials and held captive for five days. His experience, which inspired the 1993 hit movie Fire in the Sky, began on the evening of November 5, 1975.

22-year-old Travis Walton was among a group of loggers in the mountains of northeastern Arizona that observed a strange, unusually bright light hovering over the forest. Overcome by curiosity, Walton left the safety of the loggers' truck and walked toward the source of the light. He was suddenly blasted by an energy bolt of unknown composition. When his companions observed this, they fled in fear, leaving Walton behind in the forest.

Travis Walton Describes His UFO Abduction

(Photo by Noe Torres)

After the departed loggers reported the incident to local law enforcement, a massive search was conducted for Walton, but he was not found until five days later, huddled near a phone booth, disoriented and confused. He later revealed that, after being struck by the strange light beam, he had awakened inside a kind of hospital, where he was surrounded by unusual creatures that were clearly not human. After spending time in this bizarre environment, Walton was rendered unconscious by his captors and returned to Arizona.

Following the conference, Laredo TV station KGNS aired an interview with Noe Torres regarding the topic of UFOs:

> Have you ever seen something in the sky and wondered if it's more than just an airplane? Well, Noe Torres has made a career out of investigating unidentified flying objects. He says that UFOs date back to the beginning of mankind and adds that there were UFO sightings many years ago. “We found cave drawings and we have found other artifacts from thousands of years ago”
>
> Other than being seen by primitive men, Torres says there is also proof of drawings and sketches from the middle ages. Torres says that if other species have been traveling to observe us for years, “Then obviously they would have broken a lot of secrets of physics and space travel that we are only now starting to theorize on paper.”
>
> Torres says that people get wrapped up in their everyday lives and are so used to seeing airplanes or jets in the sky that they don't notice the unidentified flying objects. “If you pay close attention, on any given night in any area of the state or country you're likely to see a phenomenon that can't be explained.”
>
> In fact as recent as August there were multiple reports of a UFO sighting in Laredo. If you look closely, you can see a light shoot across the sky.
>
> Torres also talked about the UFO that landed in Laredo back in the 1940's. “It happened in July 1948 where a UFO had been pursued by

military aircraft and had gone down."

After researching the incident and talking to other UFO researchers, Torres decided to write a book about it titled Fallen Angel UFO Crash Near Laredo, Texas. When asked why people are so interested in UFO and the possibility of aliens, he said, "We realize that deep down in our intellect that there's no way in the universe that we can be the only planet with intelligent life."

So the next time you see something in the sky, you might want to take a closer look.

Laredo UFO Conference Organizers, including Executive Director Margarita Araiza (second from right)

The Laredo UFO Conference was, in the end, a smashing success. Margarita Araiza, executive director of the Webb County Heritage Foundation, said, "We have been receiving lots of very positive feedback about it, and everyone is asking for it to continue. People were very impressed with all the speakers."

Information about future UFO-related events sponsored by the foundation may be obtained at webbheritage.org or by calling the foundation at 956-727-0977.

APPENDIX A:

NEAR-COLLISION OF PLANE AND UFO NEAR LAREDO, TEXAS

AIR INTELLIGENCE INFORMATION REPORT
FROM (Agency): Laredo Air Force Base, Texas
REPORT NO: ATRC IR-PP-52

1. On the night of 4 December 1952, 1st Lt Robert O. Arnold was flying locally in a T-28 type aircraft for the purpose of completing AFR 60-2 requirements. After flying in the local area for approximately two hours, Lt Arnold returned to the airfield to enter traffic and land. Student training in T-33 Jet aircraft was in progress and the landing period was in session. Lt Arnold received this information from the tower and therefore remained aloft until the landing period was over so that he might enter normal traffic and land.

2. While waiting for permission from the tower to land, Lt Arnold circled the field in a counter clockwise manner and observed the Jet aircraft in the pattern and landing from an altitude of 6000'. After approximately 45 minutes of holding aloft, Lt Arnold ascertained there were only three Jet aircraft remaining in traffic. A surveillance of the immediate area around the field to see if any other aircraft remained aloft was made by Lt Arnold to determine how much longer he would be required to hold before landing. It was at this time he noticed a rapidly moving bluish light at approximate traffic altitude (1500' to 2000'). It was approximately 8 o'clock low to his position, which was about two miles southeast of the base at 6000', and the light appeared to be

over the Heights residential area, directly southwest of the base, and traveling on a southeasterly course. Lt Arnold considered the object to be a fourth Jet aircraft still outside the traffic pattern until he noticed the absence of position, passing and fuselage lights.

3. At this point, Lt Arnold steepened his turn to the left to keep the object in sight. The object continued on a southeasterly course until approximately six miles southeast of Lt Arnold's position, which was approximately where he had originally sighted the object. At this time the object rose immediately to Lt Arnold's altitude of 6000' and began a wide sweeping counter clockwise orbit of the Air Base. The terrific speed of the object still led Lt Arnold to think it was a Jet aircraft until he realized from previous Jet experience that the speed should have been considerably dissipated after such a maneuver. At a position approximately three miles north of the airfield in the object's orbit it immediately descended to approximately 1500 to 2000' again continued its orbit to the left around the city of Laredo, Texas, until it reached approximately the center of the business district, at which time the object made a very rapid flitting ascent due south to approximately 15,000'. the rate of climb was terrific. At this point, the object was approximately 6 to 8 miles southwest of Lt Arnold's position (which was directly over the ramp on a southerly heading). The object then turned eastward and immediately descended to Lt Arnold's altitude of 6000' again and proceeded eastward until approximately 6 miles southeast of the base again and it seemed to stop as if it were hovering, going straight away or coming straight toward Lt Arnold's aircraft. At this time, Lt Arnold added full power and declined the pitch of his aircraft to proceed directly southeastward toward the object. Lt Arnold's intentions were merely curiosity. Approximately two seconds after this action was taken by Lt Arnold, the object appeared to close at a terrific rate in

a head on approach. At approximately 100 yards in front of Lt Arnold's aircraft, the object seemed to waver slightly in a vertical plane as if determining on which side of his aircraft to pass. The object passed very closely off the left wing of Lt Arnold's aircraft within a distance of 50 yards and Lt Arnold noted a blurred reddish-bluish haze of undetermined size and shape, but definitely no larger than his aircraft. This action happened so rapidly that Lt Arnold was unable to take any evasive action. Immediately after the object passed, Lt Arnold broke sharply to the left in order to keep the object in sight. The object rapidly made a flitting ascent again to approximately 15000' and circled to the left and began to descend as if positioning itself for another pass on Lt Arnold's aircraft. At this point, out of sheer fright, Lt Arnold turned off all his running lights and spiraled steeply to the left, keeping the object in sight, and leveled off at 1500'. At this time the object seemed to level off from its circling descent towards Lt Arnold's aircraft, turn sharply to the right on a southerly heading and made another rapid flitting ascent into the atmosphere until out of sight.

4. The object was observed by Lt Arnold for approximately seven minutes and the exact time of the head on pass was 2053. The object has been referred to as an object because it was identifiable only by the small, flickering bluish light by which the observer was able to track its flight path. The size of the light was described by the observer as approximately 1/2 the size of the glow emitted by a normal position light on a T-33 type aircraft. Its speed was estimated to be in excess of 500 MPH, and its maneuvers, which consisted mainly of rapid flitting ascents and descents, were unusually outstanding because they were certainly not conventional.

5. The observer parked his aircraft on the Laredo Air Force

Base ramp at exactly 2105 and shortly thereafter reported the incident to the proper authority

6 Sketch of observer's flight path and the object's flight path is attached.

CASE #1

On the night of 4 Dec 52 an Air Force pilot was flying locally in a T-26 type a/c. It was at this time he noticed a rapidly moving bluish light at approximate traffic altitude (1500' to 2000'). It was approximately 8 o'clock low to his position, which was about 2 miles SE of the base at 6000' directly SW of the base traveling on a SE course. The pilot considered the object to be a 4th jet a/c outside the traffic pattern until he noticed the absence of position, passing and fuselage lights. The pilot steepened his turn to the left to keep the object in sight. The object continued on a SE course until approximately 6 miles SE of his position which was approximately where he had originally sighted the object. At this time the object rose immediately to the pilot's altitude of 6000' and began a wide sweeping counter clockwise orbit of the base. The terrific speed of the object still led the pilot to think it was a jet aircraft until he realized from previous jet experiences that the speed should have been considerably dissipated after such a maneuver. At a position approximately 3 miles X of the air field in the object's orbit, it immediately descended to approximately 15,000' 1500 to 200' again and continued its orbit to the left around the city of Laredo, Texas, until it reached approximately the center of the business district, at which time the object made a very rapid flitting ascent due S to approximate 15,000'. The rate of climb was terrific. At this point, the object was approximately 6 to 8 miles SW of the pilot's position (which was directly over the ramp on a S

heading). The object then Eastward and immediately descended to the pilot's altitude of 6,000' again and proceeded Eastward until approximately 6 miles SE of the base again and it seemed to stop as if it were hovering, going straight away or coming straight toward the pilot's aircraft. At this time the pilot added full power and proceeded directly SE toward the object. The pilot's intentions were merely curiosity. Approximate 2 seconds after this action was taken by the pilot, the object appeared to close at a terrific rate in a based-on approach. At approximately 100 yards in front of the pilot's a/c the object seemed to waver slightly in a vertical plane as if determining on which side of his aircraft to pass. The object passed very closely off the left wing of the a/c within 50 yards distance and the pilot noted a blurred reddish-bluish haze of undetermined size and shape but definitely no larger than his a/c. This action happened to rapidly that the pilot was unable to take any evasive action. Immediately after the object passed, the pilot broke sharply to the left in order to keep the object in sight. The object rapidly made a flitting ascent again to approximately 15,000' and circled to the left and began to descent as if positioning itself for another pass on the pilot's a/c. At this point, out of sheer fright, the pilot turned off all his running lights and spiraled steeply to the left, keeping the object in sight and leveled off at 1500'. At this time the object seemed to level off from its circling descent towards' the pilot's a/c, turned sharply to the right on a S heading and made another rapid flitting ascent into the atmosphere until out of sight. The object was observed by the pilot for approximately 7 minutes and the exact time of head-on-pass was 2053. The object has been referred to as an “object” because it was identifiable only by the small, flickering bluish light by which the observer was able to track its flight path, the size of the light was described by the observer as approximate 1/2 the size of the glow emitted by normal position light on a T-33 type aircraft. Its speed was estimated to be

in excess of 500 MPH and its maneuvers, which consisted mainly of rapid flitting ascents and descents, were unusually outstanding, because they were certainly not conventional. The observer parked his a/c on the Laredo AB ramp at exactly 2105 and shortly thereafter reported the incident to the proper authority.

ATIC COMMENT: ATIC believes that it was an a/c and that the maneuvers were exaggerated.

APPENDIX B:

THE EISENHOWER BRIEFING DOCUMENT (EBD)

Subject: Operation Majestic-12 Preliminary Briefing for President-Elect Eisenhower -- Document Prepared 18 November, 1952.

Briefing Officer: Adm. Roscoe H. Hillenkoetter (MJ-1)

OPERATION MAJESTIC-12 is a TOP SECRET Research and Development/Intelligence operation responsible directly and only to the President of the United States. Operations of the project are carried out under control of the Majestic-12 (Majic-12) Group which was established by special classified executive order of President Truman on 24 September, 1947, upon recommendation by Dr. Vannevar Bush and Secretary James Forrestal. (See Attachment "A".) Members of the majestic-12 Group were designated as follows: Adm. Roscoe H. Hillenkoetter, Dr. Vannevar Bush, Secy. James V. Forrestal, Gen. Nathan F. Twining, Gen. Hoyt S. Vandenberg, Dr. Detlev Bronk, Dr. Jerome Hunsaker, Mr. Sidney W. Souers, Mr. Gordon Gray, Dr. Donald Menzel, Gen. Robert M. Montague, Dr. Lloyd V. Berkner.

The death of Secretary Forrestal on 22 May, 1949, created a vacancy which remained unfilled until 01 August, 1950, upon which date Gen. Walter B. Smith was designated as permanent

replacement.

On 24 June, 1947, a civilian pilot, flying over the Cascade Mountains in the State of Washington observed nine flying disc-shaped aircraft traveling in formation at a high rate of speed. Although this was not the first known sighting of such objects, it was the first to gain widespread attention in the public media. Hundreds of reports of sightings of similar objects followed. Many of these came from highly credible military and civilian sources. These reports resulted in independent efforts by several different elements of the military to ascertain the nature and purpose of these objects in the interests of national defense. A number of witnesses were interviewed and there were several unsuccessful attempts to utilize aircraft in efforts to pursue reported discs in flight. Public reaction bordered on near hysteria at times.

In spite of these efforts, little of substance was learned about the objects until a local rancher reported that one had crashed in a remote region of New Mexico located approximately seventy-five miles northwest of Roswell Army Air Base (now Walker Field).

On 07 July, 1947, a secret operation was begun to assure recovery of the wreckage of this object for scientific study. During the course of this operation, aerial reconnaissance discovered that four small human-like beings had apparently ejected from the craft at some point before it exploded. These had fallen to earth about two miles east of the wreckage site. All four were dead and badly decomposed due to action by predators and exposure to the elements during the approximately one week time period which had elapsed before their discovery. A special scientific took charge of removing these bodies for study. (See Attachment “C”.) The wreckage of the craft was also removed to several different locations. (See Attachment “B”.) Civilian and military witnesses in

the area were debriefed, and news reporters were given the effective cover story that the object had been a misguided weather research balloon.

A covert analytical effort organized by Gen. Twining and Dr. Bush acting on the direct orders of the President, resulted in a preliminary consensus (19 September, 1947) that the disc was most likely a short range reconnaissance craft. This conclusion was based for the most part on the craft's size and the apparent lack of any identifiable provisioning. (See Attachment “D”.) A similar analysis of the four dead occupants was arranged by Dr. Bronk. It was the tentative conclusion of this group (30 November, 1947) that although these creatures are human-like in appearance, the biological and evolutionary processes responsible for their development has apparently been quite different from those observed or postulated in homo-sapiens. Dr Bronk's tea has suggested the term “Extra-terrestrial Biological Entities”, or “EBEs”, be adopted as the standard term of reference for these creatures until such time as a more definitive designation can be agreed upon.

Since it is virtually certain that these craft do not originate in any country on earth, considerable speculation has centered around what their point of origin may be and how they get here. Mars was and remains a possibility, although some scientists, most notably Dr. Menzel, consider it more likely that we are dealing with beings from another solar system entirely.

Numerous examples of what appear to be a form of writing were found in the wreckage. Efforts to decipher these have remained largely unsuccessful. (See Attachment “E”.) Equally unsuccessful have been efforts to determine the methods of

propulsion or the nature or method of transmission of the power source involved. Research along these lines has been complicated by the complete absence of identifiable wings, propellers, jets, or other conventional methods of propulsion and guidance, as well as a total lack of metallic wiring, vacuum tubes, or similar recognizable electronic components. (See Attachment “F”.) It is assumed that the propulsion unit was completely destroyed by the explosion which caused the crash.

A need for as much additional information as possible about these craft, their performance characteristics and their purpose led to the undertaking known as U.S. Air Force Project SIGN in December, 1947. In order to preserve security, liaison between SIGN and Majestic-12 was limited to two individuals within the Intelligence Division of Air Material Command whose role was to pass along certain types of information through channels. SIGN evolved into Project GRUDGE in December, 1948. The operation is currently being conducted under the code name BLUE BOOK, with liaison maintained through the Air Force officer who is head of the project.

On 06 December, 1950, a second object, probably of similar origin, impacted the earth at high speed in the El Indio - Guerrero area of Texas - Mexican border after following a long trajectory through the atmosphere. by the time a search team arrived, what remained of the object as been totally incinerated. Such material as could be recovered was transported to the A.E.C. facility at Sandia, New Mexico, for study.

Implications for the National Security are of continuing importance in that the motives and ultimate intentions of these visitors remain completely unknown. In addition, a significant

upsurge in the surveillance activity of these craft beginning in May and continuing through the autumn of this year has caused considerable concern that new developments may be imminent. It is for these reasons, as well as the obvious international and technological considerations and the ultimate need to avoid a public panic at all costs, that the Majestic-12 Group remains of the unanimous opinion that imposition of the strictest security precautions should continue without interruption into the new administration. At the same time, contingency plan MJ-1949-04P/78 (Top Secret - Eyes Only) should be held in continued readiness should the need to make a public announcement present itself. (See Attachment “G”.)

NOTE: The attachments were not included when this document surfaced in 1987.

APPENDIX C:

THE CUTLER-TWINING MEMO

July 14, 1954

TOP SECRET

RESTRICTED SECURITY INFORMATION

MEMORANDUM FOR GENERAL TWINING

SUBJECT: NSC/MJ-12 Special Studies Project.

The President has decided that the MJ-12 SSP briefing should take place during the already scheduled White House meeting of 16 July, rather than following it as previously intended. More precise arrangements will be explained to you upon arrival.

Your concurrence in the above change of arrangements is assumed.

ROBERT CUTLER Special Assistant to the President

APPENDIX D:
REPORT OF THE SCIENTIFIC PANEL ON UNIDENTIFIED FLYING OBJECTS (1953)

1. Pursuant to the request of the Assistant Director for Scientific Intelligence, the undersigned Panel of Scientific Consultants has met to evaluate any possible threat to national security posed by Unidentified Flying Objects ("Flying Saucers"), and to make recommendations thereon. The Panel has received the evidence as presented by cognizant intelligence agencies, primarily the Air Technical Intelligence Center, and has reviewed a selection of the best documented incidents.

2. As a result of its considerations, the Panel concludes:

a.) That the evidence presented on Unidentified Flying Objects shows no indication that these phenomena constitute a direct physical threat to national security.

We firmly believe that there is no residuum of cases which indicates phenomena which are attributable to foreign artifacts capable of hostile acts, and that there is no evidence that the phenomena indicates a need for the revision of current scientific concepts.

3. The Panel further concludes:

a.) That the continued emphasis on the reporting of these phenomena does, in these perilous times, result in a threat to the orderly functioning of the protective organs of the body politic.

We cite as examples the clogging of channels of communication by irrelevant reports, the danger of being led by continued false alarms to ignore real indications of hostile action, and the cultivation of a morbid national psychology in which skillful hostile propaganda could induce hysterical behavior and harmful distrust of duty constituted authority.

4. In order most effectively to strengthen the national facilities for the timely recognition and the appropriate handling of true indications of hostile action, and to minimize the concomitant dangers alluded to above, the Panel recommends:

a.) That the national security agencies take immediate steps to strip the Unidentified Flying Objects of the special status they have been given and the aura of mystery they have unfortunately acquired;

b.) That the national security agencies institute policies on intelligence, training, and public education designed to prepare the material defenses and the morale of the country to recognize most promptly and to react most effectively to true indications of hostile intent or action.

We suggest that these aims may be achieved by an integrated program designed to reassure the public of the total lack of evidence of inimical forces behind the phenomenon, to train personnel to recognize and reject false indications quickly and effectively, and to strengthen regular channels for the evaluation of and prompt reaction to true indications of hostile measures.

/s/ Lloyd V. Berkner

Associated Universities, Inc.

/s/ H.P. Robertson, Chairman
California Institute of Technology

/s/ S. A. Goudsmit
Brookhaven National Laboratories

/s/ Luis W. Alvarez
University of California

/s/ Thornton Page
Johns Hopkins University

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